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The President's Daily Brief

July 13, 1976

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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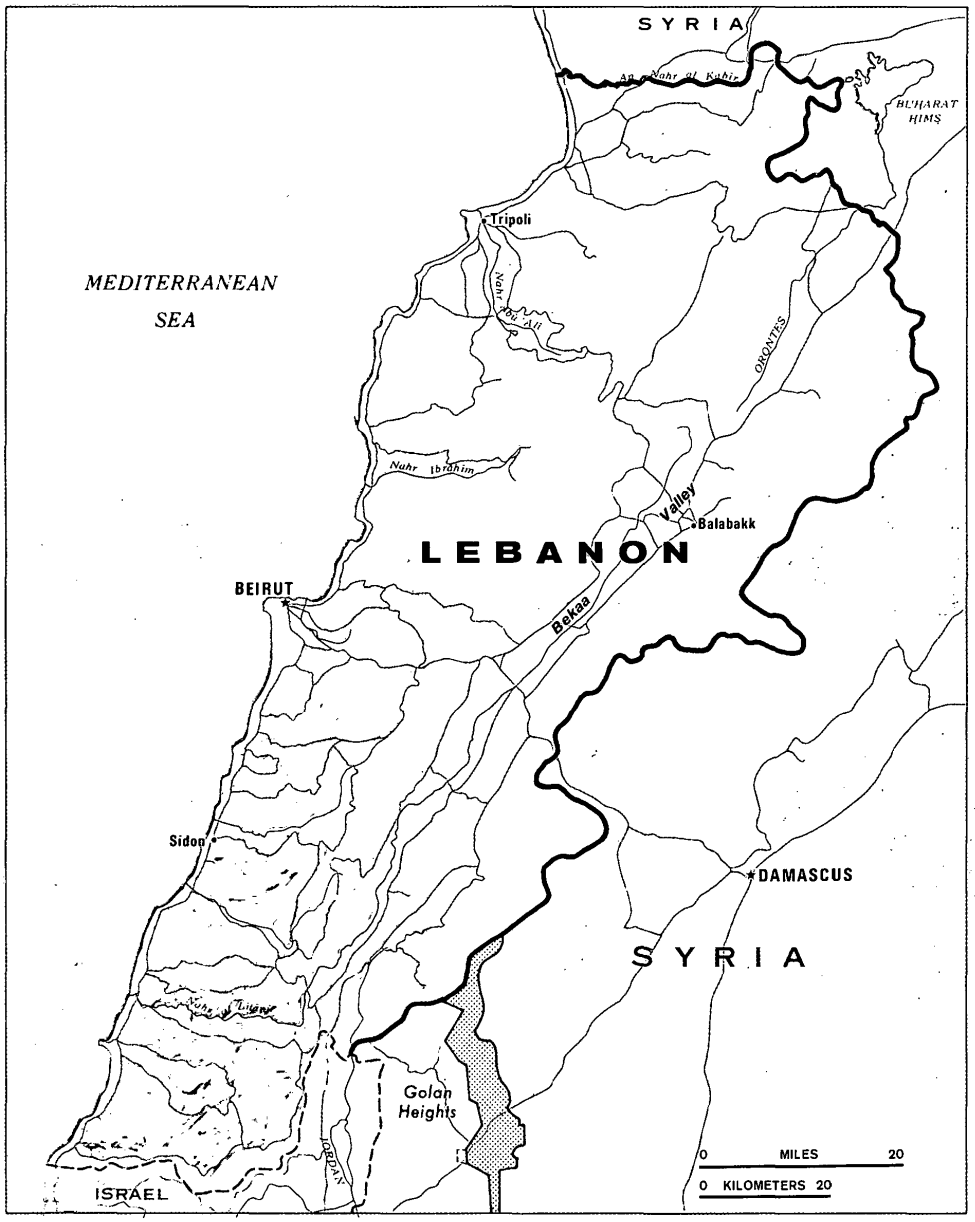

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LEBANON: *The Palestine Liberation Organization representative at the Arab League foreign ministers' meeting in Cairo announced last night that Syria had promised to withdraw its forces from the Lebanese cities of Sidon, Tripoli, and Balabakk.*

Syria made similar promises before the two previous league sessions on Lebanon in an effort to head off Arab pressure, and its latest offer probably is nothing more than a bid to buy time. Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam, who is attending the league meeting, has made no public comment on the reported pledge. Khaddam met with the Fatah representative in Cairo yesterday, in the presence of the Egyptian and Saudi foreign ministers, and may have discussed ways to end the fighting in Lebanon.

Apparently somewhat surprised by Syria's alleged promise to pull back, the Arab League foreign ministers have commissioned a study group to review the new situation.

The group is to consider an Egyptian proposal calling for an expanded Arab peace-keeping force that would drop its present passive mission and assume a direct military role in Lebanon. Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi announced yesterday that, while Egypt will not provide troops for Lebanon, it is ready to send "what is needed" to support the Arab force.

The foreign ministers are unlikely to go along with Cairo's proposal. Those Arab units participating thus far in the peace-keeping project have avoided combat areas, and probably would have little enthusiasm for getting actively involved in the fighting.

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Syrian and Christian forces yesterday continued their effort to encircle the northern port city of Tripoli, shelling two nearby Palestinian refugee camps and attempting to cut off access to them.

In eastern Lebanon, the Syrians also are pressing their advantage around the leftist stronghold of Balabakk. [redacted] 25X1 intense fighting was going on at several points in and near the city.

A few remaining defenders apparently are still holding out at the Tall Zatar refugee camp in east Beirut. The Christians say they intercepted a plea on Sunday from the defenders to their headquarters asking for permission to surrender. The request was denied.

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EGYPT-ISRAEL: *A UN Emergency Force team, conducting its bi-weekly inspection of Egypt's limited armaments zone on July 5, identified 11 battalions, three over the limit. The number of troops observed, however, was well under the limit of 8,000. The team requested the Egyptians to remove three battalions.*

[redacted] 25X1

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NOTES

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Recent Cuban *air activity suggests that Havana wants to get some special personnel and their equipment to* Angola *quickly, possibly to assist in counterguerrilla activity.*

[redacted]

Two Cuban civilian aircraft left Havana for Barbados on Saturday, and another was scheduled to fly to Barbados last night. All of the flights presumably are bound for Angola.

One of the planes that left Saturday apparently carried only cargo. The other was a special charter flight carrying 119 people and no cargo. [redacted]

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The inauguration tomorrow of Portuguese *General Antonio Ramalho Eanes as president is expected to go smoothly, although there have been rumors of possible disruptions by the left.*

Eanes is expected to appoint Socialist leader Mario Soares as prime minister. Soares is committed to forming a minority government but has refused to give any hints on the composition of the cabinet. He may be having some trouble putting together a qualified team of Socialists, independents, and military officers.

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Both Uganda *and* Kenya *are continuing to seek support for their respective positions from other African leaders.*

Ugandan President Amin reportedly sent a military delegation to Dar es Salaam yesterday to try to obtain assurances that Tanzania would stay neutral if there should be hostilities between Uganda and Kenya. The delegation is likely to get a cool reception. In the past, the Tanzanians have supported efforts by Ugandan exiles to overthrow Amin. 25X1

Somali President Siad has offered to mediate the dispute between Uganda and Kenya. 25X1

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French

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